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OF
THE FIRST PUBLICATION CONCERNING AMERICA.

LETTER

OF

Christopher Columbus

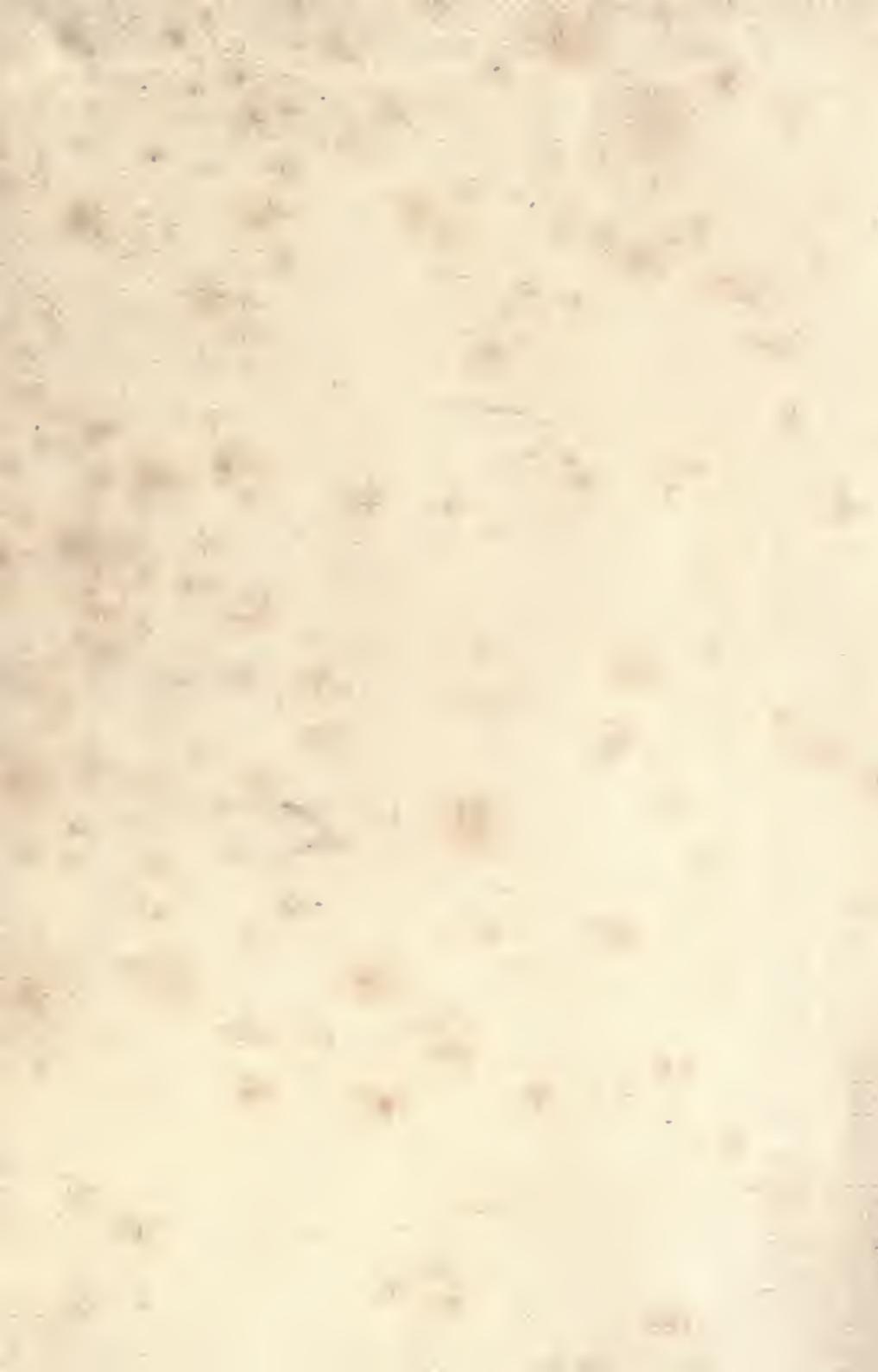
TO

RAFAEL SANCHEZ,

WRITTEN ON BOARD THE CARAVEL WHILE RETURNING FROM
HIS FIRST VOYAGE.

PUBLISHED AT BARCELONA, MAY, 1493.

CHICAGO:
THE W. H. LOWDERMILK CO.
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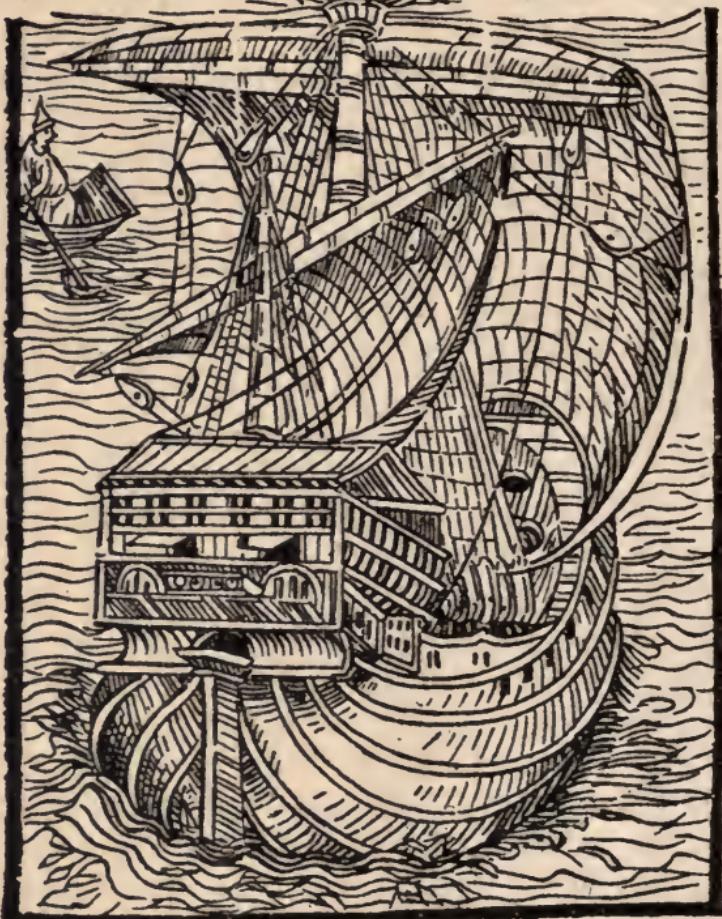
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ALICIA MOLINA DE URBINA
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Kegnū byspanie.



ADMIRALIA ROMANA
MARITIMA LIBERIA ROMANA

Oceanica Classis



De Insulis inuentis

Epistola Cristoferi Colom (cui etas nostra
multū debet : de Insulis in mari Indico nup
inuētis. Ad quas perquirendas octauo ante a
mense: auspicūs ēt ere Inuictissimi Fernandi
Hispaniarum Regis missus fuerat) ad Adag
nificum dñm Raphaelez Sanxis: eiusdē sere
nissimi Regis Thesaurariū missa. quam nobi
lis ac litterat⁹ vir Aliander d Losco: ab His
pano ydeomate in latinū conuertit: tertio kl's
Adaij. ad. cccc. xcij. Pontificatus Alexandri
Sexti Anno Primo.

Gloniam suscepit prouintie rem p
fectam me psecutum fuisse: gratū ti
bi fore scio: has pstitui exarare: que
te vniuscuiusq⁹ rei in hoc nostro iti
nere geste inuenteq⁹ admoneāt. Tricesimoter
tio die postq⁹ Sadibus discessi: in mare Indi
cū perueni: vbi plurimas Insulas innumeris
habitatas hominib⁹ reperi: quaz oim p felis
cissimo Rege nostro: pre conio celebrato ⁊ ve
xillis extensis: cōtradicente nemine possessio
nē accepi. primeq⁹ earum: diui Saluatoris no
men imposui (cuius fret⁹ auxilio) tam ad hāc
q⁹ ad ceteras alias puenim⁹: Eam vero Indi



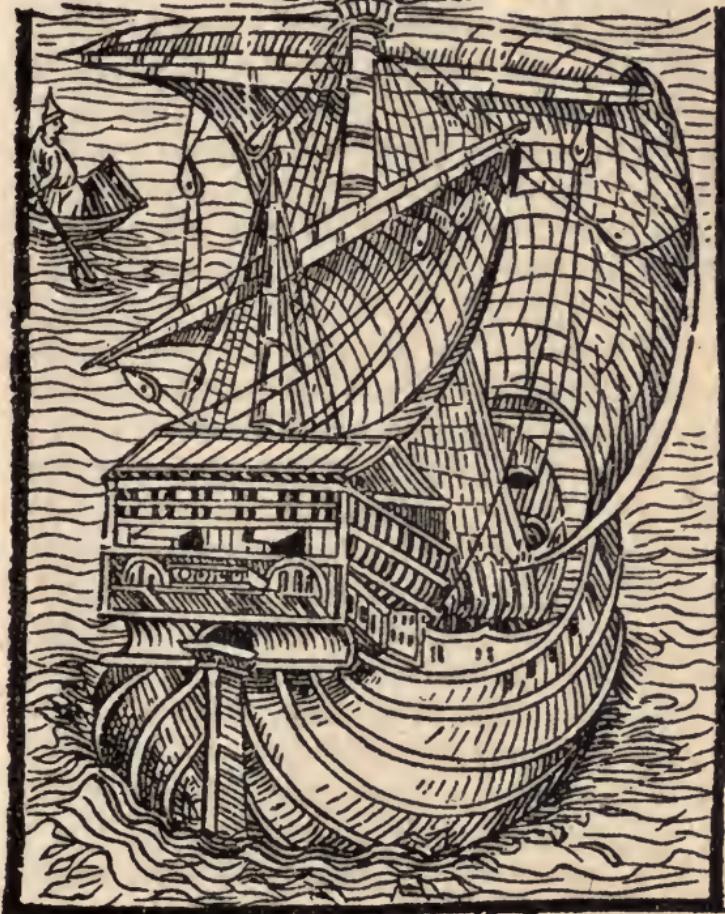
Guanahanyn vocant. Aliaz etiā vnā quanc
nouo nomine nuncupau. Quippe aliam Insu-
lam Sancte Marie Lōceptiōis. aliam Fernā-
dinam. aliaz Ihsabellam. alia Johanam. et sic
de reliquis appellari iussi. Quā primū i eā In-
sulam quā dudū Johanam vocari dixi appuli-
mus: iuxta ei⁹ lītus occidente⁹ versus aliquā-
tulum processi: tamq; eam magnā nullo reper-
to fine inueni: vt non insulam: sed cōtinentem
Chata y prouinciā esse crediderim: nulla tamē
vidēs op̄ida municipiaue in maritimis sita cō-
finibus: preter aliquos vicos p̄ predia rustica:
cum quorū incolis loqui ne quibam: quare sis-
mul ac nos videbant surripiebāt fugam. Pro-
grediebar vltra: existimans aliquam me vrbē
villasue inuenturum. Deniq; videns q; longe
admodum p̄gressis: nihil noui emergebat: et
huiusmodi via nos ad Septentrionem defere-
bat: q; ipse fugere exoptabam: terris etenim re-
gnabat bruma: ad austrum q; erat in voto cō-
tendere: nec minus venti flagitantibus succe-
debāt. cōstitui alios nō operiri successus: et sic
retrocedens ad portum quendaz quem signa-
ueram sum reuersus: vnde duos holes ex no-
stris in terram misi. qui inuestigatent: esset ne
Rex in ea prouincia/ vrbesue aliue. Ihsu per



tres dies ambularūt inuenerūtq; in numeros
populos et habitatores: paruas tñ et absq; villo
regimine: quapropter redierūt. Interea ego iā
intelleixerā a qbusdam Indis: quos ibidē su-
scepérā: quō hmōi prouincia: insula quidem
erat. et sic perrexi orientē versus: ei⁹ semp strin-
gens littora vscq; ad miliaria .cccxij. vbi ipsi⁹
insule sunt extrema. hinc alia insula ad orientem
prosperxi: distantem ab hac Johana miliaria
ribus. liij. quā protius Hispanam dixi: in eā
qz cōcessi: et direxi iter quasi p Septentrionez
quē admodū in Johana ad orientem: miliaria
dlxij. que dicta Johana et alie ibidem iusule
qz fertilissime existunt. Nec multis atq; tutissi-
mis et latis: nec alijs quos vñq; viderim cōpa-
randis portib⁹: est circū data. multi maximi et
salubres hanc interfluūt fluuij. multi quoq; et
eminētissimi in ea sunt montes. Omnes he insu-
le sunt pulcerrime et varijs distincte figuris: p-
uie: et maxima arboz varietate sidera lamben-
tiū plene: qz nūq; folij sp̄iuari credo: quip-
pe vidi eas ita virētes atq; decoras: ceu mēse
Ahaio i hispania solēt eē: qz alie florētes: alie
fructuose: alie i alio statu: h̄m vniuersitq; qli-
tate vigebat: garriebat philomena: et alij passe-
res varij ac lnumeri: mēse Rouēbris q; ipē per
eas deambulabā. Sunt p̄terea in dicta insula
ij

Johana septē vel octo palmarū genera: q̄ pce
ritate & pulchritudine (quēadmodū cetero oēs
arbores/herbe/fruciūs q̄) n̄fas facile exuperat̄
Sūt & mirabiles pin⁹/agri/ & prata vastissima/
varie aues/varie mella/varia q̄ metallā:ferro
excepto. In ea aut̄ quā Hispanā supra dixim⁹
nūcupari: maximi sunt mōtes ac pulcri: vasta
rura/nemora/ campi fera cīssimi/seri/ pacis q̄ &
cōdendis edificijs aptissimi. Portuū in hac in
sula cōmoditās: & p̄stantia fluminū copia salu
britate admixta hoīm: q̄ nisi quis viderit: cre
dulitatē sugat. Ihius arbores pascua & fruct⁹
multum ab illis Johane differunt. Hec p̄terea
Hispana diuerso aromatis genere/ auro/ me
tallis q̄ abundat. cui⁹ quidē & oīm alia q̄ quas
ego vidi: & quā cognitionē habeo: sc̄ole vtrī
usq̄ sexus nudi semp incedūt: quēadmodum
edunt in lucem. preter aliquas seminas. q̄ fo
lio frondeue aliq̄: aut bombicino velo: pūdē
da operiūt: qd̄ sp̄e sibi ad id negocij parat̄. La
rent hi oīnes (vt supra dixi) quo cunctq̄ genere
ferri. carent & armis: vt pote sibi ignotis nec ad
ea sūt apti. nō p̄p̄i corpis deformitatē (cū sint
bñ formati) s̄q̄ sūt timidi ac pleni formidine.
gestat tñ p̄ armis arūdines sole pustas: s̄ quā
radicib⁹ hastile q̄ dda ligneuū siccū & in mucro
nē attenuatū figūt: neq̄ his audēt iugis yti mā

Oceanica Classis



sepe euenit cū miserim duos vel tris homines
ex meis ad aliquas villas: vt cū eaz loquerē-
tur incolis: exiisse agmē glomeratū ex Indiis:
et vbi nostros appropinquare videbāt: fugam
celeriter arripuisse: despretis a patre liberis &
ecōtra. & hoc nō q̄ cuiquam eorū damnum aliquid
vel iniuria illata fuerit: immo ad quoscūq; ap-
puli & qbus cū verbū facere potui: quicqd ha-
bēbā sum elargit⁹: pannū aliac⁹ pmulta: nulla
michi facta versura: sed sunt natura pauidi ac
timidi. Letez vbi se cernūt tutoſ: omni metu re-
pulso: sunt ad modū ſimplices ac bone fidei: &
in omnibus que habent liberalissimi: roganti q̄
poffidet inficiat nemo: quin ipſi nos ad id po-
ſcendum inuitat. Ahaſimū erga oēs amore p-
ſeferūt: dāt queq; magna p paruis. minima l3
re nibilque pteni: ego attī phibui ne tam mi-
nima & nulli⁹ p̄cij bife dareñt: vt ſunt lancis/
parapsidū / vitriq; fragmēta / jtez claui / ligule/
quanq; ſi hoc poterāt adipisci: videbaſ eis pul-
cerrima mūdi poffidere iocalia. Accidit enim
quēdam nauitā: tantū auri pondus habuiffe
p vna ligula: quāti ſūt tres aurei ſolidi: & ſic
alios p alijs mioris p̄cij: p̄ſtim p blanquis no-
uis: & qbusdā nūmis aurcis: p q̄b⁹ habēdis da-
bāt qcqd petebat vēditor: puta vnciā cū dimi-
dia & duas auri: v̄l trīgīta. & q̄dragīta bombīd

pondō:quā ipī iā nouerāt. jē arcuum/ampbo
re/hydrie/dolijqz fragmēta:bombicez auro tā
qz bestie cōparabāt. qd quia iniquū sane erat:
vetui:dedicqz eis multa pulcra z grata q mecū
tulerā nullo iterueniēte p̄mio:vt eos mibi fa-
cili⁹ p̄ciliare:fierētqz xp̄icole:z vt sūt proni in
amorē erga Regē Reginā principesqz nostros
et vniuersas gētes Hispanie:ac studeāt p̄gres-
re z coaceruare:eaqz nobis tradere qb⁹ ip̄i af-
fluūt z nos magnope idigem⁹. Nullā hij norūt
ydolatriā:imō firmissime credūt oēz vim: oēz
potētiā:oīa deniqz bona esse ī celo: meqz inde
cū his nauib⁹ z nautis descēdisse:atqz h aīo vbl
fui suscep̄tus postqz metū repulerāt. Nec sunt
segnēs aut rudes:quin summi ac p̄spicacis in-
genū:z hoīes qui transfretat mare illd:nō sine
admiratiōe vniuscuiusqz rei rationē reddunt:
sed nūqz viderunt gentes vestitas:neqz naues
hmōi Ego statim atqz ad mare illd pueni:z pri-
ma insula quosdā Indos violenter arripui: q
ediscerēt a nobis :z nos p̄iter docerent ea:qz
ip̄i in hisce partibus cognitionē habebant . et
ex voto successit:nā breui nos ip̄os :z hij nos:
tum gestu ac signis:tum verbis intellecerunt.
magnogz nobis fuere emolumēto. veniunt mō
mecū tñ qui semp putant me desiluisse e celo
qz quis diu nobiscū versati fuerint hodieqz ver-

senf. et hi erant primi: quod id quocumque appellabamus nunciabat: alij deinceps alij elata voce dicentes. Venite venite et videbitis getes ethreas. Quoniam obrem tam semie et viri: tam impuberes et adulti: tam iuuenes et senes: deposita formidine paulo ante percpta: nos certatim viseremus magna iter stipate caterua alij cibum/ alij potum afferentibus: maxio cum amore ac benivolentia incredibili. Habet unaqueque insula multas scaphas solidi ligni: et si angustas: longitudine tamen ac forma nostris biremis similes: cursu autem velociores. Regunt remis tantummodo. Harum quedam sunt magne: quedam parue: quedam in medio persistunt. Plures tamem biremi que remigent duodecimliti transitis maiores: cum quibus in oceano illas insulas: que innumere sunt: transiti. cumque his suam mercaturam exercent: et inter eos commercia sunt. Aliquas ego harum biremium seu scapharum: vidi quod veherent septuaginta et octuaginta remiges. In omnibus his insulis nulla est diversitas inter gentis effigies. nulla in moribus atque loquela: quin omnes se intelligunt ad unum: que res utilis est ad id quod serenissimum Regem nostrum exoptare precipue reor: scilicet eorum ad sanctam christi fidem pueritatem. cui quidem quantum intelligere potui facilimi sunt et pmi. Dixi quod

admodum sum pgressus antea insulā Iohanaꝝ
per rectū tramiteꝝ occasus in orientem miliaria
cccxxij. s̄m quā viā et in suallū itineris possū
dicere hāc Iohanaꝝ esse maiore Anglia et Scu-
tia s̄l: manqꝝ vltra dicta. cccxxij. passus milia:
in ea pte q̄ ad occidentē pspectat: due: quas
non petū: sup sunt puinie: quāꝝ alterā Indi
Anan vocāt: cuiꝝ accole caudati nascunt. Tē
dunt in longitudinem ad miliaria. clxx. vt ab
his q̄s vēho mecū Indis pcepī: qui om̄is has
callēt insulas. Hispane vero ambit⁹ maior⁹ est
totā Hispania a cologna vsqꝝ ad fontē rabidiū
hincqꝝ facile arguit q̄ quartū ei⁹ lat⁹ qđ ipē
per rectā lineās occidentis in orientē traieci: mili-
aria p̄tinet. dxl. Hec insula ē affectāda et affe-
ctata nō spēnēda in qua et si aliaꝝ oīm ut dixi
per inuictissimo Rege nō solenniter possessio-
nem accepi: earū qꝝ imperiū dicto Regi peni-
tus cōmittis: i oportuni orī tñ loco: atqꝝ om̄i lu-
cro et cōmercio p̄decenti: cuius dā magne ville:
cui fiat iuitatis dñi nomē dedim⁹: possessionē
peculiariter accepi. ibiqꝝ arcem quandāꝝ eri-
gere extēmplo iussi: que modo iam debet esse
pacta: in qua hōs qui necessarij sunt viss: cū
om̄i armox genere: et vltra annū vīctu oportu-
no reliq. H̄e quādā carauellā: et p̄ alijs p̄strue-
bitā i hac arte q̄ in ceteri peritos: ac eiusdē



insule Regis erga nos beniuolentiā et familiā
ritatē incredibilē. Sunt enim gentes ille amabiles
admodū et benigne: eo quod Rex p̄dictus me fra-
trem suum dici gloriabat. Et si animū reuoca-
rent: et his quod in arce manserūt nocere velint: ne
queūt: quia armis carēt: nudi īcedūt: et nimiū
timidi. ideo dictā arcem tenētes: dūtaxat pāt
totā eā insulā nullo sibi īminente discriminē
(dūmodo leges quas dedim⁹ ac regimē nō ex-
cedāt) facile detinere. In omnib⁹ his insulis ut
intellexi: quisq; vni tñi p̄iugi acquiescit: p̄ter
principes aut reges: q̄bus viginti habere licet.
Femine magis q̄ viri laborare vident: nec be-
ne potui intelligere an habeat bona p̄pria: vi-
di enim quod vñ⁹ habebat alijs īpartiri: p̄fici da-
pes/ obsonia/ et hmoi. Nullū ap̄d eos mons p̄
reperi: ut pleriq; existimabant: sed hoīes ma-
gne reuerētie atq; benignos. Nec sunt nigrive-
lut ethiopes. habēt crines planos ac demissos
nō degunt ubi radiorū solaris emicat calor. p̄
magna nāc hic est solis vehementia: p̄ptere a
quod ab ī noctiali linea distat. ubi videtur/ gra-
dus sex et viginti. Ex montiū cacuminib⁹ ma-
ximiū q̄ viget frig⁹: sed id quādem moderant̄. In-
di: tū loci p̄suetudie: tū rex calidissimaz quod
frequēter et luxuriose vescunt̄ presidio. Itaq;
mōstra aliq; nō vidi: neq; eoz alicubi habui co-

gnitionem: excepta quadaz insula Charis nūcupata: que secunda ex Hispana in Indiam transseratibus existit. quam gens quedam a finitimiis habita ferocior incolit. hi carne humana vescunt. Habent predicti biremiū genera plurima: quibus in omnes Indicas insulas traiiciunt/depredāt/surripiunt qz que ecūqz pñt. Habil ab alijs differunt nñl qz gerunt more femineo longos crines. vtunqz arcubz et spiculis arundineis: fixis (vt diximz) in grossiori pte attenuatis hastilibz. ideo qz habēt feroces: quare ceteri Indi inexhausto metu plectuntur: s3 hos ego nñhili facio plus qz alios. Hi sunt qui coeunt cum quibusdam feminis: que sole insulam adaeunin primā ex Hispana in Indiam traiicientibz habitant. He autē femine nulluz sui sexus opus exercent: vtunqz em arcubz et spiculis sicuti d eaz piugibz dixi muniūt: sese lami nis eneis qz maria apd eas copia existit. Aliam mibi insulā affirmant supradicta Hispana maiore: ei incole carēt pilis. auroqz inf alias potissimum exuberat. Huius insule et alias qz vi di hoies necū porto: qz hoy qz dixi testimoniuū phibēt. Deniqz vt nñfi discessus et celeris reuerstōis cōpēdīs: ac emolumētū breuibz astringāt pollicor: me nñfis Regibz inuictissimis puo coz fultū auxilio: tantū auri datuū quantum

eis fuerit opus. tñ vero aromatuz. bombicis.
masticis (q apud Thium dñtarat inuenit) tan-
tūqz ligni aloes. tantum suo z hydrophilato-
rum: quantū eozū maiestas voluerit exigere.
Item reubarbarū talia aromatuz genera: q hi
quos in dicta arce reliqui iā inuenisse: atqz in-
uenturos existimo. q siquidem ego nullibi ma-
gis sum moratus nisi quantū me coegerūt vē-
ti: preterqz in villa Matiuitatis: dū arcem con-
dere et tuta omnia esse prouidi. Que et si maxia
et inaudita sunt: multo tamē maiora forent si
naues mihi vt ratio exigit subuenissent. Elez
multū ac mirabile hoc: nec nostris meritis co-
respondēs: sed sancte Christiane fidei: nostro-
rumqz Regū pietati ac religioni: quia qd hu-
manus cōsequi nō poterat intellectus: id hūa-
nis concessit diuinus. Solet em̄ deus suos su-
os: qui qz sua p̄cepta diligūt: etiā i impossibili-
bus exaudire: vt nobis i p̄ntia p̄tigit: q ea p̄se
cuti sum: q hacten⁹ mortaliū vires mīme atti-
gerat. nā si hāz insulaqz qpiā aliqd sc̄pseft aut
locuti sūt: oēs p̄ ambages et p̄iecturas nemo se
eas vidisse asserit: vñ p̄pe videbaſ fabula. Igi-
tur Rex et Regia p̄ncipes ac eoz regna felicis-
sima: cūcteqz alie Christianoz p̄uincie Salua-
tori dñ oīo nō xpo agam⁹ gr̄as: q rāta nos
victoria munereqz donauit: celeb̄et p̄cessiōes

peragant solennia sacra. festaq; fronde velent
velubra. Exultet Christo i terris: quae admodum
in celis exultat: cum tot populorum peditas a
hac anima saluatum iri preuidet. Letemur et
nos: tu propter exaltationem nostre fidei. tu pro
pter rerum temporalium incremeta: quoque non solum
Hispania sed vniuersa Christianitas est futu
ra piceps. Hec ut gesta sunt sic breuiter enar
rata. Vale. Uisbone pridie ydus a Marcij.

Cristofor^o Colom Oceane classis Prefect^o.

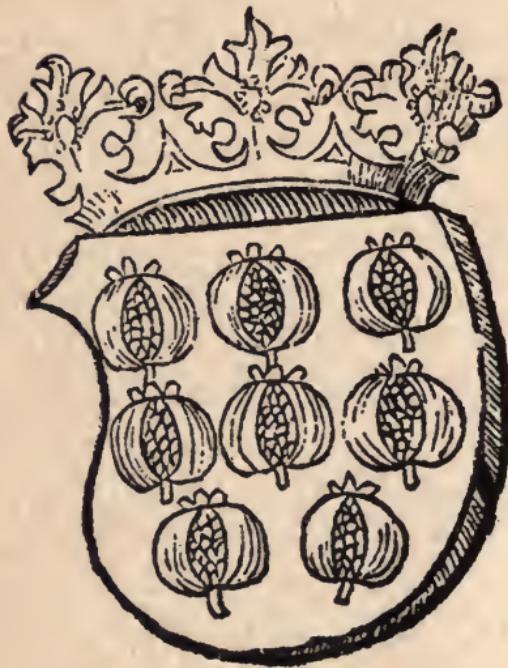
Epigrama. R. L. de Lorbaria Episcopi
Abontispalusij
Ad Invictissimum Regem Hispaniarum

Item nulla Hispanis tellus addenda triuphis:
Atque parum tantis virib^o / orbis erat.
Nunc longe Eois regio depresa sub yndis.
Auctura est titulos Betice magne tuos.
Unde reperto i mrito referenda Colubo
Gratia: sed summo est maior habenda deo:
Qui vincenda parat noua regna tibi q; sibi q;
Legis simul fortem prestat et esse pium.

Fernād' rex byspania



Granata:





TRANSLATION.

*LETTER OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,
the great benefactor of the present age, con-
cerning the newly discovered islands of India
upon the Ganges, upon which enterprise he
was despatched eight months since by the in-
vincible Sovereigns of Spain, Ferdinand and
Isabella; directed to Don Rafael Sanchez,
Treasurer of their most Serene Highnesses.
Translated from the Spanish into Latin by
Leandro de Cosco, April 25, 1493, first year
of the pontificate of Alexander VI.*

As I know you will take pleasure in hearing of the success of my undertaking, I have determined to send you an account of the occurrences of my voyage and discoveries. Thirty-three days after my departure from Cadiz I arrived in the sea of India, where I discovered many islands, inhabited by innumerable people. Of these I took posses-

sion in the name of our fortunate monarch, with public proclamation and colors flying, no one offering any resistance. I named the first of these islands San Salvador, thus bestowing upon it the name of our holy Saviour, under whose protection I made the discovery. The Indians call it Guanahanyn. I gave also a new name to the others, calling the second Santa Maria de la Concepcion, the third Fernandina, the fourth Isabella, the fifth Juana. In the same manner I named the rest. Arriving at the one last mentioned, I sailed along the coast toward the West, discovering so great an extent of land that I could not imagine it to be an island, but the continent of Cathay. I did not, however, discover upon the coast any large cities, all we saw being a few villages and farms, with the inhabitants of which we could not obtain any communication, they all flying at our approach. I continued my course, still expecting to meet with some town or city, but after having gone a great distance, and not meeting with any, and finding myself proceeding toward the North, which I was desirous to avoid on account of the cold, and, moreover, meeting with a contrary wind, I determined to return to the South, and, therefore, put

about and sailed back to a harbour which I had before observed.

At this place I sent two men into the country to see if the king or any cities were to be found. These returned in three days, having discovered a great number of towns, but all of them small, and without any government. In the meantime I had learned from certain Indians whom I had taken here that this country was an island. I returned along the coast to the east, a distance of three hundred and twenty-two miles, which brought me to the extremity of the island. Here I discovered to the East another island, fifty-four miles from Juana. I gave it the name of Espanola, and coasted along the island to the North as at Juana I had proceeded to the East, a distance of five hundred and sixty-four miles. All these islands are very fertile. That of Juana abounds in safe and capacious harbours, which surpass in excellence all I have ever seen elsewhere. It is watered by a great number of large and pleasant rivers, and contains many high mountains.

These islands are of a beautiful appearance, and present a great diversity of views. They may be traversed in any part, and are adorned with a

great variety of exceedingly lofty trees, which to appearance never lose their foliage, for I saw them as verdant and flourishing as they exist in Spain in the month of May, some covered with flowers, others loaded with fruit, according to their different species and their season of bearing, the whole offering a spectacle of great beauty. The nightingale and countless other birds were singing, although it was the month of November when I visited this delightful region. There are, in the island of Juana, six or eight sorts of palm trees, superior to those of our land in height and beauty, and this superiority is likewise observable in the other trees as well as in the herbs and fruits. Here are to be seen the most beautiful pine trees and the most extensive fields and pastures, a great variety of birds, several sorts of honey, and many kinds of metal, with the exception of iron. In the island named Espanola there are lofty and beautiful mountains, large cultivated tracts, woods, fertile fields, and everything adapted to the purposes of agriculture, the pasturage of cattle, and the erection of houses. The excellence of the harbours here, and the abundance of the streams which contribute to the salubrity of the climate,

exceed imagination. There is a considerable difference between the trees, fruits, and fields of this island and those of Juana, but here are found divers sorts of precious drugs, gold, and metals. The inhabitants of both sexes, in Espanola, and all the other islands which I saw or heard of, go naked as they were born, all except a few females who wear at the waist a green leaf, a portion of cotton, or bit of silk, which they manufacture for this purpose.

As I before remarked, they possess no iron, and they neither use nor are acquainted with weapons, to the exercise of which indeed they are not at all adapted, not by reason of any corporal deficiency, as they are very well shaped, but on account of their great timidity. Instead of arms they have canes dried in the sun, to the largest ends of which they fix a piece of wood sharpened at the end; of these, however, they have not the courage to make much use. I have in many instances sent two or three of my men to their towns to communicate with the inhabitants, when the Indians would tumultuously rush out, and seeing our people drawing near, run away with such haste that the father would abandon

his child and the child his father. This timidity was not owing to any violence or injury we offered them, as I was in the practice of making presents of cloth and other things to all the natives whom I met, but arose from their natural mildness and want of courage. Notwithstanding this, as soon as they have thrown aside their fear, and consider themselves in safety, they are very ingenuous and honest, and display great liberality with whatever they possess.

They never refuse to give any thing away which is demanded of them, and will even themselves entreat an acceptance of their property. They exhibit a great friendship towards every one, and will give whatever they have for a trifle or nothing at all. I forbade my men to purchase any thing of them with such worthless articles as bits of earthenware, fragments of platters, broken glass, nails, and thongs of leather, although when they got possession of any such thing they valued it as highly as the most precious jewel in the world. In this manner of bartering, a sailor has acquired for a leather strap or piece of rope, gold to the amount of three sueldos. Others have obtained as much for a matter of still lower value. For

new Spanish coins they would give any thing asked of them, as an ounce and a half or two ounces of gold, or thirty or forty pounds of cotton. Thus they would trade away their cotton and gold like idiots, for broken hoops, platters and glass. I prohibited their traffic on account of its injustice, and made them many presents of useful things which I had carried with me, for the purpose of gaining their affection, in order that they may receive the faith of Jesus Christ, be well disposed towards us, and be inclined to submit to the King and Queen, our Princes, and all the Spaniards, and furthermore that they may furnish us with the commodities which abound among them and we are in want of.

They are not idolators, but believe that all power and goodness is in heaven, and that I had proceeded from that place with my ships and men; under this notion they received me at my first arrival as soon as they had banished their fear. They are not stupid and indolent, but acute and sagacious. Those of them who navigate the seas among those islands give singular accounts of what they have observed upon their voyages, but have never seen people who wear clothes, nor

any ships similar to ours. On my arrival I took by force from the first island a few of the Indians, in order that we might become acquainted with one another's language, and to gain a knowledge of what their country contained. These were of singular use to us, as we came to understand each other in a short time by the help of words and signs. I have them still with me, and they continue in the belief that we come from heaven. This information they published wherever we arrived, exclaiming in a loud voice, "Come! come! and see the celestial people." Upon this call, the natives would come thronging to us, after having banished the fear which seized them at first, men, women and children, old and young, crowding the roads and bringing us victuals and drink, with the utmost affection and reverence.

In every one of these islands there are a great number of canoes, each one made of a solid log, of a narrow shape, somewhat resembling our fustas, but swifter in the water; they are navigated solely by oars. They are of different sizes, the most of them containing seats for eighteen rowers. Throughout these islands there is no diversity in the appearance of the people, their manners or

language, all the inhabitants understanding one another; a very favorable circumstance, in my opinion, to the design which I have no doubt is entertained by our king, namely, to convert them to the holy Christian faith, to which as far as I can perceive they are well disposed. I have said that I sailed from W. to E. three hundred and twenty-two miles along the island of Juana; from the length of this course I am confident that this island is larger than England and Scotland together, for besides the extent which I coasted there are two other provinces to the West which I did not survey. One of these is named by the Indians Anam, and contains inhabitants with tails. These tracts extend to the distance of a hundred and eighty miles, as I have learnt from the Indians with me, who are well acquainted with them.

The island of Espanola is as large as that part of Spain which extends from Catalonia to Fontarabia, which I infer from the extent of that side of it which I sailed along, being five hundred and forty miles in length. I took possession of this fine island, as I had done of the others, in the name of our invincible king; and fixed upon a spot for a large city here, as I judged it the most favorable

place. I called it Navidad, and ordered the construction of a fortress here, which is by this time finished. At this place I left a sufficient number of men, with all sorts of arms, and a sufficiency of provisions for above a year. I also left them a caravel and expert workmen, after having secured them the friendship of the king of this part of the country. The people are a friendly and amiable race, and the king took a pride in calling himself my brother. Even if their sentiments should change, and they should become hostile towards us, they will not be able to effect any injury to those who remain at the fortress, as they are destitute of weapons, go naked, and are very cowardly, so that those whom I have left there will be able to retain the whole island in subjection without any danger, if they adhere to the regulations with which I charged them.

Each of the natives, as far as I can understand, has one wife, with the exception of the King and Princes, who are permitted to have as many as twenty. The women appear to do more labour than the men. Whether there exists any such thing here as private property I have not been able to ascertain, as I have observed that an individual

has been set to distribute to the others, in particular, food and such things. I found no ferocious, sanguinary people in these parts, as some seem to have imagined the people here to be, but they are a very mild and friendly race. Their color is not black like that of the Ethiopians. Their hair is lank and hanging down. They do not inhabit those parts where the sun's rays are very powerful, as the heat is excessive here, the latitude being apparently twenty-six degrees. On the summits of the mountains the cold is great, but they do not suffer any incommodity from it, by being accustomed to the climate, and by the use of hot meats and drinks, which they consume very prodigally.

People of a monstrous description I saw none nor heard of any, except those of the island named Caris, which is the second on the course from Espanola to India; this island is inhabited by people who are regarded by their neighbors as exceedingly ferocious; they feed upon human flesh. These people have many sorts of canoes, with which they make incursions upon all the isles of India, robbing and plundering wherever they go. Their difference from the others consists in their wearing long hair like that of the women, and

in using bows and arrows of cane, these last constructed, as I have already related, by fixing a piece of sharpened wood at the larger end. On this account they are deemed very ferocious by the other Indians, and are much feared by them; I think, however, these men are precisely like the others. These are the natives who go to visit the females, who are the sole inhabitants, of the island of Matenin, which is the first on the route from Espanola to India. These women exercise none of the common occupations of their sex, but manage the bow and dart, as we are told of the ancients. They wear armour made of plates of copper, of which metal they have great abundance.

I am assured by the Indians that there is another island, larger than Espanola, whose inhabitants are without hair, and who possess a greater quantity of gold than the others. From this island, as well as the others, I have taken some of the inhabitants to confirm the accounts which I give.

Finally, to sum up the whole, and state briefly the great profits of this voyage, I am enabled to promise the acquisition, by a trifling assistance from their Majesties, of any quantity of gold, drugs, cotton, and mastick, which last article is

found only in the island of Scio; also any quantity of aloe, and as many slaves for the service of the marine as their Majesties may stand in need of. The same may be said of rhubarb, and a great variety of other things, which, I have no doubt, will be discovered by those I have left at the fort, as I did not stop long at any single place, unless obliged to do so by the weather, with the exception of the city of Navidad, where we made some stay to build the fort and provide the necessary securities for the place.

Although the discoveries actually accomplished appear great and surprising, yet I should have effected much more had I been furnished with a proper fleet. Nevertheless, the great success of this enterprise is not to be ascribed to my own merits, but to the holy Catholic faith and the piety of our Sovereigns, the Lord often granting to men what they never imagine themselves capable of effecting, as he is accustomed to hear the prayers of his servants and those who love his commandments, even in that which appears impossible; in this manner has it happened to me, who have succeeded in an undertaking never before accomplished by man. For although some persons

have written or spoken of the existence of these islands, they have all rested their assertions upon conjecture, no one having ever affirmed that he saw them, on which account their existence has been deemed fabulous.

And now ought the King, Queen, Princes, and all their dominions, as well as the whole of Christendom, to give thanks to our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has granted us such a victory and great success. Let processions be ordered, let solemn festivals be celebrated, let the temples be filled with boughs and flowers. Let Christ rejoice upon earth as he does in heaven, to witness the coming salvation of so many people heretofore given over to perdition. Let us rejoice for the exaltation of our faith, as well as for the augmentation of our temporal prosperity, in which not only Spain, but all Christendom shall participate. Such are the events which I have described to you with brevity. Adieu.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS,
Admiral of the Armada of the Ocean.

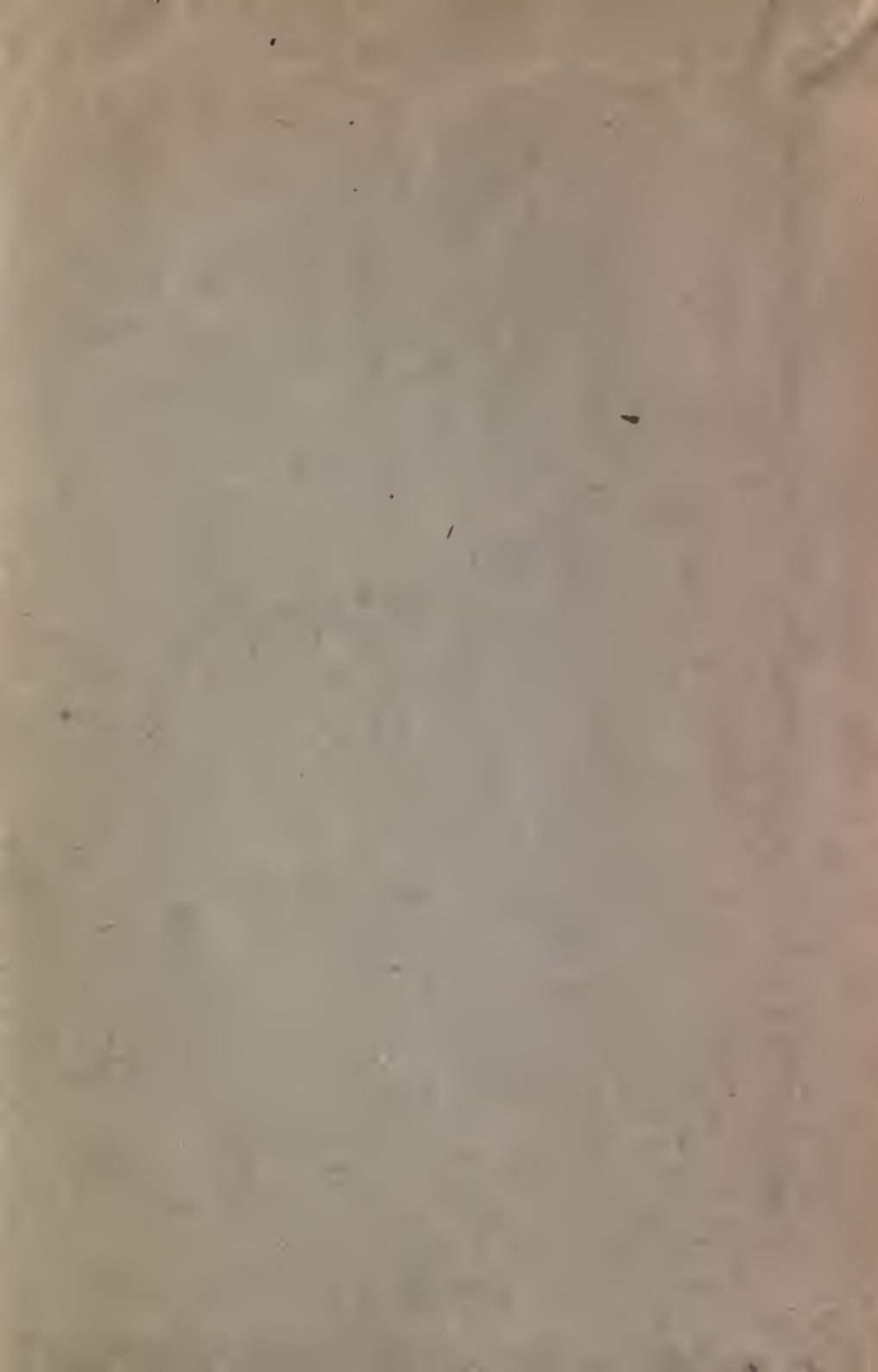
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